

Boundin': Identifying a Hero (Key)

1. Explain the main character's origin. Is it rare or mysterious?

Our Sheep Hero's background is unknown, but he seems to be popular with the other animals, impressing them with his ability to dance and his fine fleece.

2. Explain how the main character is neither a fool nor invincible. Be sure to discuss what fears and/or dangers he is subject to.

Our Sheep is confident when wearing his wool coat, but when sheared, he lacks confidence. His self-identity is tied to his appearance, so he's susceptible to arrogance, humiliation, and attacks against his pride.

3. Explain what the main character seems to lack in his *ordinary world*—his life prior to the adventure that makes him a hero? What is missing from his life?

He's too happy and content. He's never been tested; he's never had to endure any hardships that would prove to the world that he is, indeed, a hero. Furthermore, he does not understand just how complex the world is. Our sheep is naïve about the outside world until the arrival of the Model T (shearers).

4. Explain the main character's *call to adventure*. In short, what journey is he called upon to make or what goal or quest is he called upon to follow?

Being sheared is his call to adventure. Our Sheep must realize that his self-worth is not dependent upon his appearance.

5. Explain how the main character's way is not always direct or clear to him.

Our sheep is lost after his shearing. Consequently, he must have the help of the Jackalope to in order to regain the "dance in his step."

6. Once the hero enters upon his life adventure, he must undergo a series of tests of varying difficulties. Explain how the main character's way is beset with dangers, loneliness, and temptation in order to test him.

After the humiliation of being taunted by the other animals, our sheep must regain his self-confidence to continue on. It takes him a little while to get his groove back. When the Jackalope shows him how to bound, he bounces on his head and flounders in the beginning (symbolizing his lack of confidence). However, as time goes on, he learns to not only control his boundin' but he also learns to revel in this ability (symbolizing his emotional recovery and growth).

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7. Many quest tales supply friends, servants, or disciples as company for the hero who will help him achieve his goal, change his understanding, and grow as an individual. Who are the main character's allies?

Groundhogs

Fish

Rattlesnake

Owl

Jackelope

Sheep-Shearers—a blessing in disguise b/c they supplied the call to adventure that spurred his personal growth.

8. Who or what are the main character's enemies?

Our sheep battles both internal and external enemies. He is plagued by the sheep shearers who shaved him. Moreover, his friends become his enemies when they taunt and tease him. However, his greatest enemies are the ones within. He becomes self-conscious when he is shaved and has to fight humiliation, fear, and embarrassment.

9. Other than general allies, a hero usually has ONE character who functions as a guide or counselor. Who is the main character's guide and how does he or she help him?

The jackalope is his guide and points out his ill founded self-worth, telling our sheep that he has a "pink kink in his think."

10. After he has proven himself worthy by successfully completing his series of tests, the hero must still completely die to his old life or his old understanding of the world. He must descend into darkness, and he is not the same after emerging from the darkness. Explain the main character's symbolic *death* and *resurrection*.

Our sheep truly learns to value himself, accepting—and even submitting to—shearing every May.

11. Often the hero's *supreme ordeal* is his most difficult test. Explain the ultimate testing of the main character.

Getting over his embarrassment and fear of sheep – shearing. Furthermore, when he has his fleece back he's still boundin'. Our sheep's self-worth is no longer attached to his appearance.

12. Often the hero is granted a gift to take with him into his new understanding and his new world. Termed *seizing the sword*, this gift is one the hero can take with him into his new life as a reward and help for having faced his greatest and life-changing ordeal. Who or what is the main character's symbolic sword? Is it a person, a thing, or simply his new understanding?

Our Sheep feels isolated after the first shearing, but then realizes that it is a temporary condition and that he will recover. The outside coat is not the true essence of his soul. The essence must come from within and that is what gives him the dance in his step. This new understanding of himself is his symbolic sword.